STORYBOOK BIRDHOUSE. Ron Pavelka adds a whimsical touch to his cleverly built nest boxes with sweeping roof lines, rounded edges and colorful paints.

No Fairy Tale—This Birdhouse Really Is Cute

This lovely laminated lair for feathered friends is straight out of a children's storybook.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there was a birdhouse builder who found a way to use scrap wood that otherwise would have been thrown into the fireplace.

The craftsman's name was Ron Pavelka, and he constructed storybook bird abodes like the one pictured above in his little workshop located in Orange, California.

"I've built many of these storybook birdhouses for friends and family," Ron shares. "They use them to decorate their gardens and yards…the style is different, and I get lots of compliments on them."

This is one of the more challenging and time-consuming birdhouse designs in this book. But we've given you a head start by providing the patterns on page 31 to duplicate its sweeping and whimsical curves.

All you'll need to add to this house is a colorful paint job.

"You can easily alter the plan to suit your own taste," Ron adds. "You'd be surprised how a difference in color choice changes its appearance."

One word of caution—because there's a lot of wood and glue in this project, the birdhouse weighs about 8 pounds when finished. So we suggest mounting it in a sturdy place, such as on a post or on a deck rail. That way, you can be sure the feathered family that moves in will live happily ever after.

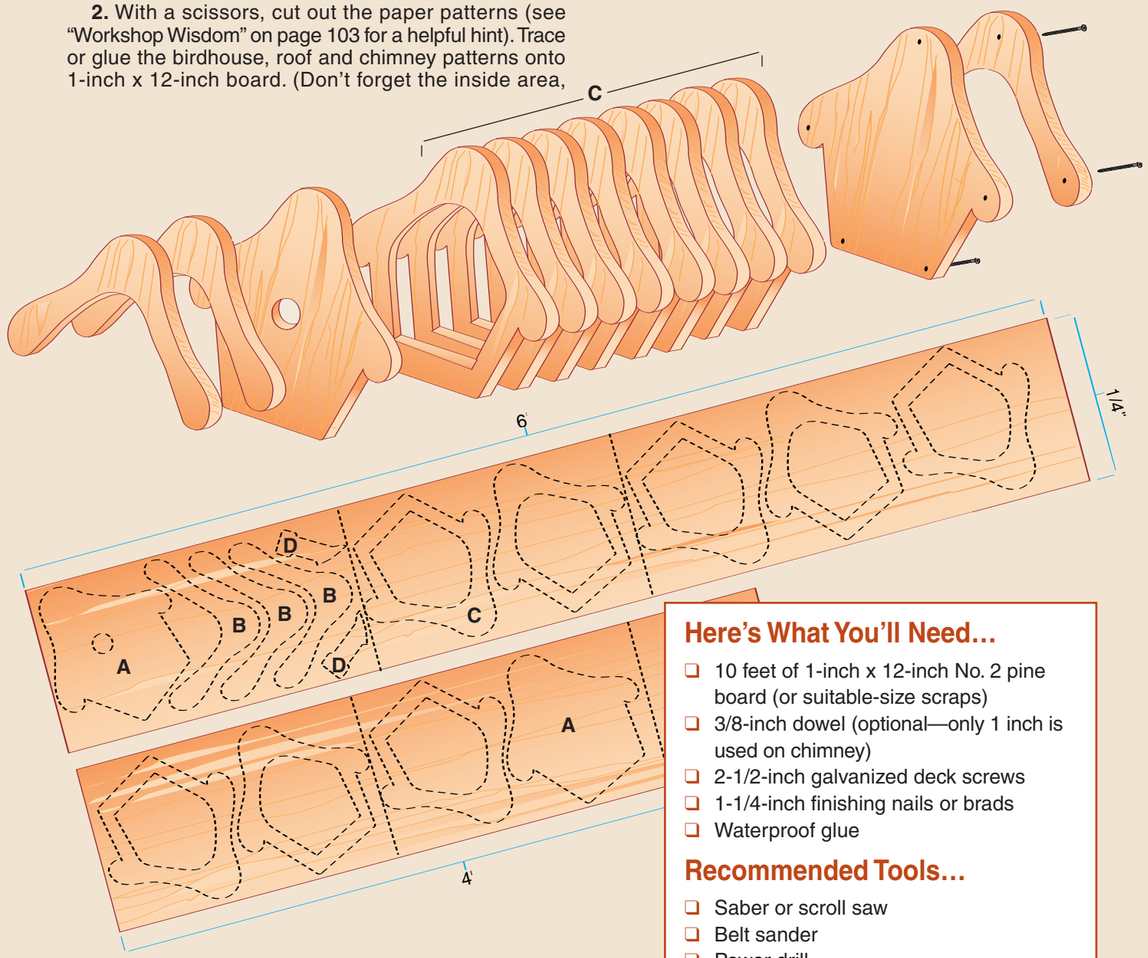
Once Upon a Project…

1. Enlarge the birdhouse pattern so it measures 11-1/4 inches from roof peak to floor. This can be done on a photocopy machine by increasing it 200%. Or you can make a grid of 1-inch squares and draw the pattern square by square. Also, enlarge the patterns for the roof eaves and chimney by using one of the same methods.

2. With a scissors, cut out the paper patterns (see "Workshop Wisdom" on page 103 for a helpful hint). Trace or glue the birdhouse, roof and chimney patterns onto 1-inch x 12-inch board. (Don't forget the inside area, too. When cut out, this will become the nesting cavity.)

3. Cut out the nesting cavity area from this board using a saber saw or scroll saw. Drill a hole inside the nest cavity area for a place to insert the saw's blade.

(Continued on next page)



Here's What You'll Need…

- ❑ 10 feet of 1-inch x 12-inch No. 2 pine board (or suitable-size scraps)
- ❑ 3/8-inch dowel (optional—only 1 inch is used on chimney)
- ❑ 2-1/2-inch galvanized deck screws
- ❑ 1-1/4-inch finishing nails or brads
- ❑ Waterproof glue

Recommended Tools…

- ❑ Saber or scroll saw
- ❑ Belt sander
- ❑ Power drill
- ❑ Bar clamps or other large clamps

4. Cut out the outside of the birdhouse from the board, being careful to support it on your workbench so it does not break. Also cut out the roof eaves and chimney.

When finished, these pieces will serve as patterns, so sand the edges smooth. Hang on to these pieces because once your friends and family see this house, they'll want you to make one for them, too.

5. Trace the wooden birdhouse pattern (both inside and out) eight times onto the boards. Then trace only the outside of the birdhouse pattern two more times. You will not cut out a nest cavity from these two pieces because they're the front and back of the house.

Trace the roof-eaves pattern three times and the chimney twice.

6. Cut out all pieces, carefully following the guidelines you drew. (The neater you cut, the less sanding you'll have to do later.) Remember to cut the nesting cavity of each birdhouse piece first.

7. Drill an entrance hole (see chart on page 39 to help determine the size and location) into the front board with a spade bit. (See step 4 on page 26 for a helpful hint.)

8. Now it's time to glue the birdhouse pieces together (except for the back, which will be removable). Glue them in sets of two or three pieces at a time and clamp them together until dry. This will help keep the pieces from sliding out of position.

Step 8

The trick to this step is to apply an even coat of glue to each piece, line it up with the next piece and carefully tack them together with two 1-1/4-inch finishing nails or brads. This will keep the pieces from sliding as you clamp them together. Work quickly so you can clamp the pieces together before the glue sets.

If you don't have clamps large enough to hold the pieces together, place something heavy on top of each set.

After each set dries, begin gluing the sets together to form the birdhouse (see photo above). Again, clamp the sections together until the glue dries.

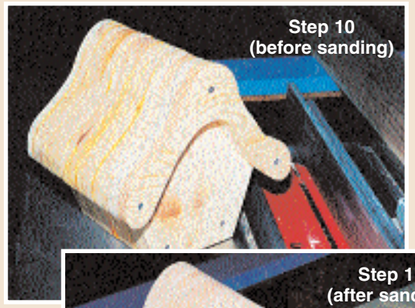
At the end of this step, the front of the birdhouse should be attached to eight pieces with nesting cavities.

9. Glue two roof eaves onto the front piece, using the same method as in the previous step.

10. Glue the last eave to the back piece. When dry, line up the back piece with the rest of the birdhouse and drill pilot holes for attaching it with five 2-1/2-inch deck screws. (At the end of the nesting season, remove these screws. The back of the birdhouse will open for easy cleaning.)

11. Belt sand the roof and body of the birdhouse for a smooth, one-piece appearance. This could take some time (it took us 1-1/2 hours, which included some hand sanding), so be patient.

You may also want to sand the edges round, or use a router with a round-over bit to give the birdhouse a smoother finish.


Step 10 (before sanding)

Step 11 (after sanding)

12. Drill four 1/4-inch drainage holes in the floor.

13. Glue the two chimney pieces together with waterproof glue (see below). When they're dry, sand the edges round, except at the base. This is where you'll attach the chimney to the roof.

14. Attach the chimney to the roof with waterproof glue and wire brads.

15. To add even more character to the chimney, cut two 1/2-inch pieces from a 3/8-inch-diameter dowel and glue them to the top of the chimney to resemble flues.

You're now ready to paint, stain or decorate your storybook birdhouse. Just use your imagination…it may attract elves, gnomes, fairies or, hopefully, feathered friends.